

Town of Mansfield
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Meeting of 18 November 2009
Community Room, Mansfield Community Center
APPROVED MINUTES

Members present: Peter Drzewiecki, Quentin Kessel, Scott Lehmann, John Silander, Frank Trainor. *Members absent:* Robert Dahn, Joan Stevenson. *Others present:* Jason Coite & Rich Miller (UConn Office of Environmental Policy), Matt Hart (Mansfield Town Manager), Greg Padick (Mansfield Director of Planning), Lon Hultgren (Mansfield Director of Public Works), Eric Thomas (Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection), Robert Thorson

1. The meeting was **called to order** at 7:35p by Chair Quentin Kessel.
2. The draft **minutes of the 21 October 09 meeting** were approved with correction of a minor typo.
3. **UConn Composting Facility.** Rich Miller reported that construction of the new composting facility at a site off Rte. 32 just north of Rte. 44 is now under way. A field trip to a similar facility on a dairy farm in Caanan was arranged for Town residents concerned about odors emanating from UConn's facility; those who went were reassured, according to Miller.
4. **UConn Hazardous Waste Site.** Kessel asked about the status of UConn's plan to move its hazardous waste transfer station out of the Fenton River watershed. Miller indicated that the University was working on it but was not yet ready to identify a new site. Greg Padick expressed surprise at this, as he had understood that the University had settled on a site off N. Eagleville Rd.; he requested better communication with the Town on this issue.
5. **Storrs Campus Drainage Master Plan.** Miller & Jason Coite reviewed the University's Drainage Master Plan. In part because the University neglected to obtain Flood Management Certificates for some UConn 2000 projects, the DEP has required it to develop a master plan for dealing with storm-water runoff, with emphasis on reducing flow of sediment and pollutants into Eagleville Brook, which is where most UConn runoff goes at present. DEP and UConn have recently signed a Memorandum of Agreement to this master plan. The plan aims to manage the volume and rate of storm-water runoff and to improve its quality.
Total runoff volume will be reduced by enhancing infiltration on campus (with rain gardens, green roofs, and porous pavement). Volume directed to Eagleville Brook will be reduced by diverting runoff from 43 acres of this watershed (near W-lot) to the Fenton River watershed, via a pipe from Swan Lake (at the Chemistry Building) under Rte. 195 to Valentine Meadow & Roberts Brook. (Swan Lake formerly drained to Eagleville Brook via underground piping. This

drain is now an overflow device, most of the water being directed to Roberts Brook.)

Runoff rate will be managed by using Swan Lake and Mirror Lake (at Manchester Hall) as storm-water reservoirs; a v-notch weir to be installed at Mirror Lake's outflow will increase the lake's capacity.

Water quality will be improved by installing sediment separators on inflows to Swan and Mirror Lakes, and constructing a plunge pool at the Swan Lake outfall in Valentine Meadow (currently badly eroded).

Among the issues raised in discussion were these:

- Q: Why wasn't the Commission informed of the development of the plan and asked to comment, since it is charged by statute with advising the Town on water resource issues? A: It's a state project, & the state is not required to do so. (Apparently, no other stakeholders – Willimantic Water Works, Willimantic River Alliance, et al. – were asked for input on the plan, either.)
- Q: What permitting process did the University go through before redirecting Swan Lake's outflow from Eagleville to Roberts Brook? A: This did not happen on our watch, but we'll find out & let you know.
- Q: Won't diverting storm-water runoff into the Fenton degrade water quality in the Fenton River well-field and the Willimantic Reservoir? A: If DEP had reason to think so, it wouldn't have signed off on the drainage master plan.
- Q: Inasmuch as runoff now apparently raises the temperature of Eagleville Brook, won't the diversion also raise the temperature of Roberts Brook and the Fenton River (a DEP Trout Management Area)? A: The new treatments of the runoff should prevent that.
- Q: What alternatives to the Fenton diversion were considered? A: More costly diversion to another watershed (e.g., Cedar Swamp).
- Q: What is the basis for claiming that implementation of the plan will slow runoff for 2-, 10-, and 100-year storms to pre-UConn 2000 flows (measured in cfs) in both Eagleville and Roberts Brooks? A: Projections from watershed models calibrated using historical data.
- Q: By how much will runoff be reduced for various storm events by improved infiltration at UConn? A: The University is now gathering data on the rain gardens, green roofs, and porous pavement it has already installed.

The Commission thanked Miller & Coite for their presentation. Kessel will re-draft his letter to DEP for consideration at the Commission's December meeting.

6. Updated operating procedures? Kessel observed that the Commission's updated operating procedures still awaited approval or disapproval by the Town Manager. Matt Hart promised to attend to it.

7. FOI Guidelines. Kessel noted that the *FOI Guidelines for Boards, Commissions, and Committees* brochure included with the materials for this meeting prohibits “conducting business via e-mail” and wondered exactly what counts as “conducting business.” For example, the location for this meeting was arranged by e-mail. He would appreciate some clarification from the Town Manager.

8. Adjourned at 9:35p.

Scott Lehmann, Secretary, 20 November 09; revised 24 November 09; approved 16 December 09.